2020 ConTex Call for Proposals
UT System-CONACYT Postdoctoral Research Fellowships
Deadline to Submit Proposals: April 3, 2020

Background

On June 21, 2016 the University of Texas System and Mexico’s National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT) signed a Cooperation Agreement to establish the ConTex Program to administer cooperative bi-national academic and research activities for the mutual benefit of the United States and Mexico as neighbors and partners. In November 2016, ConTex launched its first call for proposals for Postdoctoral Fellows.

Objectives and Scope

We are pleased to announce a call for proposals for postdoctoral fellows at UT System or at Mexican institutions of higher education or research for the 2020-2021 academic year. The objective of the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program is to increase scholarly exchange and collaboration by supporting Mexican postdoctoral scholars at UT System institutions and UT System postdoctoral scholars at Mexican institutions. This call is open to new as well as continuing ConTex Postdoctoral Fellowships. 2019 Postdoctoral Fellows who wish to extend their fellowship may apply for a second-year continuation of the research fellowship. Continuation proposals will compete against new 2020 proposals and are not guaranteed funding.

Continuation applicants must submit an Intent to Apply form by March 3, 2020. Applicants who fail to submit an Intent to Apply form by March 3, 2020 will not be considered for funding.

Priority will be given to the following agreed upon topics:

- Medicine and Health Sciences
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Water Resources and Management
- Sustainability
- Renewable Energies
- Biotechnology and Agricultural Sciences
- Engineering
- Urban Planning
- Migration and Human Rights
- Education
Fellowship Candidate Eligibility Requirements:

- Candidates must have graduated from a PhD program no more than five years prior to April 3, 2020.
- Applicants must have earned their PhD by the time of submission (PhD candidates are not eligible to apply).
- Applicants who have received previous CONACYT funding must have fulfilled all obligations regarding their earlier fellowships.
- Only one proposal may be submitted by a postdoctoral fellowship applicant.
- Only one proposal may be endorsed by a faculty host.
- In the case of renewals, candidates must have been awarded a one-year UT-System-CONACYT Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in the last 12 months. Faculty host (and co-host if applicable), as well as host institution(s) must remain the same as in the first year of the fellowship.

Award Amount

- Fellowships will be awarded for a period of up to 12 (twelve) months.
- If the selected fellow is a Mexican citizen hosted at one of the institutions of the UT System, he/she will receive:
  - Annual award of $57,540.60 (salary of $50,004 and institutional allowance of $7,536.60)
    Institutional allowance is to be budgeted first to cover health insurance exclusively for the postdoctoral fellow (no support for dependents) and any remaining funds may be used to help support other costs related to the appointment, or the fellow’s research.
- If the selected fellow is a graduate of a UT System institution hosted at a Mexican institution, he/she will receive compensation according to CONACYT’s salary guidelines.

Conditions of Support

- Fellows may begin their residencies as early as September 1, 2020 and no later than December 1, 2020.
- The fellowship may be connected to a project supported through the ConTex Collaborative Research Program. However, the postdoctoral proposal must be unique, i.e., it may not be a copy of the proposal submitted to the research grant program.
- Fellows are responsible for paying all applicable taxes in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
- Fellows are responsible for paying all costs of obtaining required documents (e.g., passport, visa, etc.) to conduct research in a foreign country.
- Fellows must make host institution aware that the host faculty member, department, center, institute, or institution will be responsible for paying applicable fringe benefits other than health insurance as well as any other campus based required fees. The $7,536.60 allowance may be used towards these expenses after the fellow’s health insurance has been covered.
- Fellowship is a full-time, in-person commitment at the host institution.
- Fellows must be affiliated with the host institution during the entire tenure of the fellowship.
- Fellows must complete proposed research project within established time frame. A final report of activities must be submitted jointly by the fellow and host faculty member. The report must include all publications submitted individually or jointly with the host faculty member. The PI and fellow will present their findings in peer-reviewed conference presentations and in peer-reviewed publications. Any presentation of findings (for example, at conferences, in articles, or online) should include the following acknowledgement:
“The research reported here was supported by The University of Texas System and Mexico’s Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT) through the ConTex Postdoctoral Fellowships Program. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of these funding agencies”.

Application Requirements


The following items are required as part of the application packet:

1. **Basic Information page – form to be filled online**
   - Name of applicant (as it appears on his/her official ID)
   - Email address
   - Current physical address
   - Date of graduation from doctoral program
   - Institution of graduate degree
   - Host institution for postdoctoral fellowship application
   - Host department, center or institute for postdoctoral application
   - Host faculty member for postdoctoral fellowship application
   - Email address of host faculty member
   - Title of proposed project
   - For Mexican applicants: status with regard to CONACYT fellowships and obligations: Liberado/no Liberado
   - Connection with ConTex Collaborative Research Project? Yes/No

2. **The following documents must be included in one, single PDF file, in the order indicated below. Applications that exceed the stated limits will not be evaluated.**
   - **a) Research Proposal**
     - **Cover Page**
       - Proposed Project Title
       - Fellowship Candidate’s Name
       - Fellowship Candidate’s Email Address
       - Host Institution
       - Host Faculty’s Name
       - Host Faculty’s Email Address
     - **Research abstract in English (not to exceed 400 words)**
     - **Project plan (not to exceed three pages, font size 11 Times New Roman, single space).**
       - Describe the proposed research and specific goals and objectives for the work to be undertaken. The following should be addressed:
         - Significance of the proposed research within the discipline
         - How project is cutting-edge research within the discipline
         - Plans for continuation of the research, as well as the potential impact of the proposed research on the professional and academic development of the applicant
         - Methodology, relevant literature and any disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and international collaborative approaches
         - Expected impact of research in Mexico and Texas
In the case of renewals, updated project plan. Please describe the proposed research and specific goals and objectives for the work to be undertaken based on the project plan originally awarded and include substantial detail about accomplishments during the current postdoctoral fellowship period and reasons for seeking the extension.

- Timeline (not to exceed one page) should detail research and work to be undertaken during the course of the one-year postdoctoral stay, or during the course of the extended postdoctoral stay, in the case of renewals. The timeline should clearly specify where and when academic and research-related activities would take place.

b) For renewals only: Report on status of activities to date regarding the 2019 UT System-CONACYT Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. Format to be provided by ConTex.

c) Curriculum vitae of candidate — Updated curriculum vitae in the case of renewals (not to exceed three pages), including educational achievements, academic positions and/or awards, a list of relevant publications and current works in progress.

d) Abbreviated curriculum vitae of host faculty — Updated curriculum vitae of host faculty in the case of renewals (and co-host if applicable), including publications and research interests in the last five years (not to exceed five pages).

e) Letter of intent from the host faculty (and co-host if applicable) indicating research responsibility and support. The letter of intent should provide evidence of the host’s familiarity with the applicant’s project plan, indicate host support for the proposed activities, and discuss the potential benefit of the stay to the scholar and host institution. The letter must be written on official letterhead and signed by the host faculty (not to exceed 2 pages).

In the case of renewals, letter must be recent and address research and activities undertaken during the current fellowship period, need for extending funding period, and potential for future productivity by the postdoctoral scholar. This letter must be written on official letterhead and signed by the host.

f) Host Faculty Acknowledgement Form available on our website. Faculty member must acknowledge his/her understanding of conditions of award, as well as his/her commitment to secure funding to cover fringe benefits other than health insurance, if applicable. Form must be signed and dated.

g) Official letter of invitation from a UT System department, laboratory, research center, or institute; or from a Mexican institution of higher education or research center registered in the National Register of Institutions and Scientific and Technological Institutes (RENECYT). The letter must be written by the department chair or by the director of the research institute, dean, etc. hosting the candidate’s residency (someone other than the host faculty). It must document that the candidate will be affiliated with that institution by the award start date and will be provided with adequate mentoring, space, basic services, needed resources, and supplies. It must also reference the amount in cost sharing that will be provided for any fringe benefits other than health insurance as well as any applicable campus based international processing fees.
In the case of renewals, an updated Official Letter of invitation indicating official authorization for the proposed extended research stay, in the terms cited above.

h) Certification of completion of Ph.D. degree. Applicant must have earned his/her Ph.D. by the time of submission. Diploma or other evidence of Ph.D. completion must be submitted.

i) For Mexican applicants: certification of good standing with CONACYT (carta de liberación, if applicable).

3. Supporting letters

Two letters of reference in English and/or Spanish addressing the applicant’s research accomplishments and ability to undertake a postdoctoral research project. Ideally, one letter must be from the applicant’s dissertation adviser, or from a faculty mentor who has knowledge of the applicant’s research and academic trajectory. Letters must be on official letterhead and signed.

In the case of renewals, the two letters of reference can be the same submitted in the 2019 UT-System-CONACYT Postdoctoral Research Fellowship application.

Review and Evaluation Process

Faculty members or researchers from Mexican and UT System institutions with expertise in the applicable topics will evaluate and rate each proposal. Proposals should be written for a committee with broad expertise and interests.

1. Administrative Review – Every application is reviewed to ensure that the candidate meets the eligibility criteria and that all required documents are included in the proposal.

2. Evaluation Committee Assessment – Applications that pass the administrative review are subsequently evaluated based on scientific merit, relevance, and level of impact for the mutual benefit of the United States and Mexico. Evaluation criteria include:
   - Qualifications of the applicant.
   - Clarity, quality, and feasibility of the proposed work during the fellowship period.
   - Potential of proposed work to strengthen bilateral research ties and networks between UT System and Mexican institution.
   - Evidence that the scientific and academic activities to be undertaken will allow the applicant to develop unique expertise, to increase his or her knowledge, and provide access to new techniques and methodologies that will benefit the applicant’s future home institution.
   - Strong justification for conducting a full-time stay at the proposed host institution
   - Evidence that the host institution will provide adequate infrastructure for the postdoctoral fellow to be able to conduct the research study as proposed.

General Considerations

- Incomplete applications, submissions that do not meet the requirements, or applications not submitted online through the ConTex website will not be evaluated.

- The support granted under this call will not, under any circumstances, constitute an employment relationship with CONACYT, UT System institutions, or ConTex.
• The number of scholarships awarded under this call is subject to the provisions of the Agreement of Cooperation between CONACYT and UT System and the availability of funds.

The terms of the present call for proposals are in accordance with the legal requirements derived from Mexico’s *Ley de Ciencia y Tecnología* and other applicable statutes or regulations. Awards will be administered by ConTex in accordance with UT System policies and procedures and in observance of CONACYT’s institutional requirements.

The submission of applications under the terms of this call implies the acceptance of the established conditions and regulations issued by CONACYT, which may be applicable to this program.

Deadline to submit applications: to be considered, proposals must be submitted through the ConTex website no later than April 3, 2020.

ConTex will not provide pre-review of proposals, and reviewer comments on individual proposals will not be provided.

Results will be announced by June 30, 2020.

For additional information contact:

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